HANDS LIFTING HEARTS
INITIATIVES SOCIETY
RESOURCE 02

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF ABUSE EARLY

Understanding patterns. Recognizing harm. Finding support.

For African, Black and Caribbean families, youth, and caregivers in Alberta

Family Violence Prevention / Breaking Silence, Building Safety

Family violence can begin with subtle behaviours that grow over time. Recognizing early warning signs can help families and communities seek support sooner.

Sponsored by the Ministry of Children and Family Services, Government of Alberta

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Alberta Government

Recognizing patterns and finding words

Family violence rarely begins with extreme or obvious harm. In many cases, it starts with small, subtle behaviours that grow over time. Recognizing early warning signs allows families and communities to intervene sooner, reduce harm, and access support before situations escalate.

This resource helps African, Black and Caribbean families identify early signs of abuse in adults, children, and youth, while acknowledging cultural, migration, and systemic barriers that may make recognition difficult.

Understanding abuse and early warning signs

01

Recognize Abuse — Government of Canada

Plain-language overview of emotional, physical, financial and psychological abuse, including early warning signs.

READ / OPEN RESOURCE

02

Gender-Based Violence Facts

Canadian Women’s Foundation: information on patterns of abuse and why early recognition matters.

READ / OPEN RESOURCE

Click a resource card to open its link. Images are AI-generated and do not depict HLH participants.

Videos for reflection

Supplied video links are grouped by topic. Preview them before use with a family or group.

03 **What Is Family Violence? (Canada)**
Explains what family violence looks like and how it often begins with subtle behaviours.

VIDEO / OPEN RESOURCE

04 **Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationships**
Helps viewers identify controlling and harmful behaviours before they escalate.

VIDEO / OPEN RESOURCE

05 **Community Tips to Combat Online Hate**
Explores digital harm, online intimidation and the importance of speaking up early.

VIDEO / OPEN RESOURCE

06 **You’re Not Alone — Kids Help Phone**
Youth-friendly encouragement to reach out for help when home feels unsafe.

VIDEO / OPEN RESOURCE

07 **How Family Conflict Affects Youth Mental Health**
Explains emotional impacts of living with ongoing conflict or emotional abuse.

VIDEO / OPEN RESOURCE

These video URLs were supplied in the source document; availability and content could not be verified.

When to seek help and what to do next

Support resources for families, youth, facilitators and community workshops.

08

Kids Help Phone

Confidential support for children and youth experiencing family conflict, fear or emotional distress.

READ / OPEN RESOURCE

09

If Someone You Know Is Being Abused

Government of Canada: guidance on recognizing signs and offering safe support.

READ / OPEN RESOURCE

10

ShelterSafe — Find Help Near You

Searchable directory of shelters and family violence services across Canada.

READ / OPEN RESOURCE

Recognize early. Reach out safely.

These resources support learning about family violence, emotional harm and unsafe relationship patterns. Choose resources that fit your needs and circumstances.

Prepared as part of the HLH Family Violence Prevention Toolkit.